



How long is too long? Committee to take evidence on detention criteria in Melbourne

The Migration Committee will be holding a public hearing in Melbourne on Thursday 11 September as part of a newly defined direction for its inquiry into immigration detention.

On 29 May, the Committee was tasked with determining a blueprint for Australia's future immigration policy, addressing criteria and infrastructure options.

Chair Michael Danby reported that in light of the Minister's recent announcements of reforms to immigration detention, the Committee had decided to report on the terms of reference in three parts.

"This enables us to give timely and appropriate advice to the Parliament at this significant phase in the development of our future immigration detention policy," he said.

The first report, which the Committee plans to release before the end of the year, will comment on the criteria that should be applied in determining how long a person should be held in immigration detention.

The second report will address issues of transparency and service provision available in immigration detention, and the third options for expanding community and alternative forms of detention.

Under the reforms announced by the Minister, people will only be held in detention until they have passed a health check, had their identity established and been deemed not to be a risk to the Australian community.

"The Committee welcomes the reforms announced by the Minister," said Mr Danby, "and we hope, as the Minister has suggested, that they will lead to less people in detention for a shorter period of time."

"But given the mental, physical and financial toll of prolonged and indefinite detention, the Committee has an important role in reviewing the criteria that are applied to detention cases and making sure we get this right."

In Melbourne, the Committee will be hearing from a range of witnesses including the Australian Red Cross, the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, the Justice Project and the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law.

They will also be visiting Maribyrnong Immigration Detention Centre, Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation, and the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre in West Melbourne.

The public hearing program and venue details is attached. The Committee Chair, Michael Danby MP, is available for comment on (03) 9534 8126.

For background information, including the full terms of reference, please visit the inquiry website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/detention/index.htm> or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560 or jscm@aph.gov.au.

Thursday 11 September

Joint Standing Committee on Migration

Public hearing
for the inquiry into immigration detention

Meeting Room G.2
State Parliament Committee Offices
55 St Andrews Place, Melbourne

Time	Witness
9:00 am	Red Cross Australia
9:45 am	Refugee and Immigration Legal Service
10:30 am	Morning tea
10:45 am	The Asylum Seeker Project (ASP) Hotham Mission (submission no. 93)
11.30 am	Detention Health Advisory Group (DeHAG) (submission no. 101)
12.15 pm	The Justice Project, Liberty Victoria and Law Institute of Victoria (submission no. 127)
1:00 pm	Lunch
1.45 pm	Brotherhood of St Lawrence (submission no. 92)
2.30 pm	Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, Monash University (submission no. 97)
3.15 pm	Mr Guy Coffey and Dr Ida Kaplan (submission no. 128)
3.45 pm	Close

Members of the public and media are welcome to attend the hearing. The relevant submissions are available on the inquiry website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/detention/subs.htm>. For further information please contact the Committee secretariat.